

at this point in time, this late in the day, when we need to approve legislation to fund this Government.

The Senator from Massachusetts also came to the floor to talk about education. Yes, it is a top priority. We are increasing funding for education. I am on the education committee. We discussed that. In the last 2 years this Congress has spent more money on education than President Clinton asked for. We increased his request for education money. We spent more than he asked for.

But what was the debate? It went on an extended period of time right here. The debate was: Who is going to direct how it all gets spent? Were we going to trust the men and women who run our schools, the men and women who have been elected in each one of our communities to be on the school board? Are we going to trust them to spend more of this Federal money or are we going to continue to micromanage education dollars from Washington?

I have been in 20 schools this year. I have met with principals, teachers, and students in each of these schools. I always set a time to meet with the principals and teachers, and usually school board members drop in, and I ask them what their problems are.

I say: The Federal Government gives about 7 percent of the cost of education in America; 93 percent comes from State and local governments. I ask: Based on the regulations and paperwork, the interruption in your ability to discipline in the schools caused by Federal regulation, which would you prefer—the Federal Government take its 7 percent and leave, take away the paperwork and the rules and regulations, or get the 7 percent?

The answer: Take your money and go.

These are teachers who have given their lives to education. They are passionate about this. They don't want a Federal bureaucracy in Washington running their schools. What they would like is as much money as we can get to them. And we are increasing funding for State education well above the inflation rate, two or three times the inflation rate above what President Clinton has asked for. We tried to pass a new Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is up for reauthorization this year. We had to stop considering it basically because of a filibuster from the other side. We voted. We had amendments. We went on for over 2 weeks debating the issue.

The other side was losing that debate. They were losing the votes. But if you don't have over 60 votes here, you can't shut off debate. The majority leader urged them to agree to a time limit. He said we can have many more amendments, and let's vote on them and bring this bill to conclusion. But they would not because, in fact, they had a filibuster going on. They did not want to change this old educational system that is run by bureaucracies 10 feet deep, people who have lost sight of

what education is all about. All they want to do is make sure their accounting is right in every school system in America.

There are over 700 Federal education programs in this country. The other side keeps arguing that we can't get rid of them. No, we can't consolidate them. No, we can't trust the people in our communities we elect to run our schools. No, they are not to be trusted. We have to tell them what to do. One Senator on this floor said: They may spend the money on swimming pools. Who knows best how to educate children—professional educators, teachers who have given their lives to it, principals who are dedicated to it, or some Senator here who has thousands of issues that come before them, everything from Medicare, Social Security, the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, all those issues? We don't know education. Neither does AL GORE know education.

I will tell you who has been wrestling with education for six years, and that is the Governor of Texas. Governors are involved in education. When he talks about education, he talks about it with a deep and abiding passion because he understands it. He has been in schools all over Texas. He is hearing the same things I have heard in the 20 schools I have been in around Alabama this year: that the Federal Government is not an aid, is not helping us, it is hurting us.

We have Federal regulations that keep children in classrooms who are a threat to the teacher and the students, and they cannot be removed because of Federal rules. We have paperwork that is driving them crazy. They can't spend the money on what they need to spend it on. They have to spend it only on what this Government and its 700 education programs say to spend it on.

So we tried to fix that. We couldn't do it because of the President and the filibuster that went on here. If we elect the Governor of Texas, who has managed education, as Governors do, who ran on education, got elected on education, and was elected with a 69-percent vote for reelection on education, we are going to get some changes.

The bureaucrats in Washington, the special interest crowd in Washington, the group that tries to turn out votes in elections, those people are not going to be happy. But teachers, principals, parents, and school board members are going to be happy because it is time for a change. It is time to break this Washington stranglehold on education. We give less than 10 percent of the money for education, but we micromanage how it is all spent. It is not acceptable, and we must stop it.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each until 7:30 p.m.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, will the time from now until 7:30 be equally divided? I think the Republicans may have extra minutes remaining from the earlier hour. Could the Chair tell us how much time the Republicans have used?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On the Republican side, there is approximately 10 minutes remaining; on the Democratic side, there is 1 minute remaining.

Mr. REID. I ask that the Chair take that into consideration in dividing up the next approximately 55 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the time being equally divided between the parties?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. The time that has been allocated, the 10 minutes to the majority and 1 minute to the minority, should go forward, after which it would be equally divided.

Mr. REID. That is what I said.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, to conclude on this education matter, this Congress has been responsible. It has increased funding for education well above the inflation rate. It has increased funding for education the last 2 years that I have been on the education committee. I know for a fact, above what the President asked for.

We believe that money ought to be sent down to the States. It ought to be sent to them, and they ought to be challenged to develop, as Texas did, a plan of excellence. That ought to be ultimately determined by good, sound testing that that State adopts so it can tell whether learning is occurring.

There are schools in this country, unfortunately, where learning is not occurring. They are dysfunctional schools. We do not need to keep putting money in those kinds of circumstances. Good quality testing can tell whether learning is occurring. We ought to allow the men and women whom you and I elect in our hometowns all over America to decide how to run that fundamentally.

Yes, we will want to have controls on it, certain rules and regulations, but fundamentally we need to have a different mindset. We need to have a mindset that says to the educators, the people who are in our classroom, that we trust you, we are trying to help you, not make your life more troublesome, not giving you more headaches and paperwork; we want to help you teach our children, to help create more magic moments in that classroom where learning occurs.

There are good schools in Alabama and all over America. I have been in those schools. I had the honor to acknowledge a few days ago Mr. Terry Beasley, the principal of the year for the State of Alabama. He taught my children in public schools in Alabama.

He is a magnificent person with an unbelievable degree of dedication to learning. He has gone from one of the greatest teachers I have known to one of the best principals one would know.

There are people like that all over the system. We are not helping them. This governmental regulation and bureaucracy is making it worse and making their lives more difficult. We can improve that, but not the way we are going. We are going to need some changes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

STANDING UP FOR TEXAS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I see the distinguished senior Senator from Massachusetts has been at it again, trying to bring the Presidential campaign to the Senate floor and misrepresenting the record in Texas. Once again, as promised, I am here to stand up for the record of the Governor of Texas and to stand up for the State of Texas.

I ask my distinguished colleague, the Senator from Massachusetts, if he would consider in the future not misrepresenting Texas for two reasons:

One is, I don't think it is persuasive to anyone in America to continue to hear the downgrading of a State in our country, and I certainly don't think it affects the Presidential race. Secondly, I just don't think that it is necessary or proper to downgrade a great State such as Texas or any other State in America.

Of course, I am from Texas; of course, I love my State. But I think, objectively speaking, a lot of other people do because we have just surpassed New York to become the second largest State in America. People are not moving there because they think we have a terrible education system. They are not moving there because they think we don't treat our children well. They are not moving there because we don't have health insurance for our children. They are not moving there because we have a bad environment. They are moving there because it is a wonderful place in which to live, and it has gotten better since George W. Bush became Governor.

So let me just set the record straight. We have a patients' bill of rights in Texas. It is the model upon which other States are now basing the laws that they are beginning to pass or look at passing. We have a very good patients' bill of rights because it has an independent review mechanism. You have an internal review and you have an external review so that the bottom line that we all want will occur, and that is that a patient will get the care the patient and the doctor believe is in the best interest of the patient. That is what a patients' bill of rights is. We also have caps on limits for lawsuits which are allowed after the exhaustion

of the internal and external reviews. There are caps on pain and suffering and noneconomic damages. That makes sure that we don't have a plethora of lawsuits, and it would keep the patient and the doctor making the decisions for health care in the forefront of our interest. So it is a model law. It is a good law. Whatever misrepresentations have been made about it, the Governor allowed it to become law. It happened on his watch.

Secondly, we are very proud of the improvements we are making in our public education system. Most States are not satisfied with where they are in public education. Texas is working very hard to improve our public education system, and under the leadership of Governor George W. Bush we are winning. Test scores are going up and, most especially, the test scores are going up in the minority communities. That is one of the focuses that Governor Bush has made in my home State of Texas because we all looked at the high school dropout rate. We were all unsatisfied with that number. We said, what can we do, especially in our Hispanic community, where the high school dropout rate is the highest per capita? We said, we have to go back to the basics.

That is what Governor Bush did. He went back to the basics and he put the resources into it. That is about \$8 million more than had been spent before. He said, we are going to go to the third grade level and that is going to be the firewall. We are going to test children in preschool; we are going to test them in the first grade and in the second grade. But if they can't read at grade level in the third grade, they will not be promoted to the fourth grade because we know that if children can't read at the early stages, they will never be able to reach their full potential in the public education system. That was the initiative of Governor Bush and, I might add, along with a great house speaker, Pete Leahy, a Democrat, and a Lieutenant Governor—at the time it was Bob Bullock, a Democrat; today, it is Rick Perry, a Republican. But we do work in a bipartisan way in the legislature. We always have in Texas. That is something that we have done since the days I served in the Texas legislature. We worked together, Democrats and Republicans. It is why I was so surprised when I came to the Senate and it didn't work that way here. We are not used to doing business that way.

With all due respect, I think Texas has it right because after the elections in Texas, we come together—the Governor and the legislature—to do what is best for the children and the people of Texas. Wouldn't it be refreshing if that were the case in Washington, DC? Wouldn't it be refreshing if the leadership that Governor Bush has shown, along with Pete Leahy and Bob Bullock, could be transferred to Washington, DC, with President Bush and TOM DASCHLE and RICHARD GEPHARDT?

Wouldn't that be refreshing? That is what Governor Bush would like to do because we think it works. We know it works because the test scores show that it works.

Madam President, we are making a huge leap in the right direction for improving public education, and we are going to the heart of the matter. We are making sure our children in the third grade can read, and we are focusing on the basics. We are focusing on reading, writing, arithmetic, history.

All of us have seen these polls of young people in our country where the television person walks up to the young person and says: What is the only State in America that is totally surrounded by water?

The young person can't answer the question. We know Hawaii is the answer, but I think we should focus on the basics—geography and history. That is what we are trying to do in Texas, and that is the kind of leadership we need for this country.

So I hope that we will examine the record in Texas in a positive way—or even in a neutral way, for Heaven's sake—because if you are neutral, you would see that Texas is a great place in which to live; that we have a great quality of life. Do we have problems? Sure. Are we working on those problems? Yes. We are doing it under the leadership of our Governor, George W. Bush.

Let me say, too, that we are also making great strides on the environment. We have a particular problem, particularly in Houston, TX, where 50 percent of the chemical refining plants in the world are located—the petrochemical refining plants. Fifty percent of the petrochemicals in the world are located on the gulf coast between Houston and Victoria.

I see that my time is up. I will step back and allow others to speak, but I will not step back if the record of Texas is misrepresented. I am here to stand for the facts and the good record of our Governor and our great State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. KENNEDY. Parliamentary inquiry. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Of course.

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand we will have some time. The House has not concluded with the continuing resolution. I understand it is agreeable with the leaders that the time remaining will be divided equally. Is the time remaining equally divided between the two sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The previous order provided that the remaining time until 7:30 would be equally divided.

The Senator from Oregon.

GORE-CHERNOMYRDIN AGREEMENT

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise as one Senator in this body